

as a family. Nancy stayed at home, allowing Al to work and support the Family. Through his employment, Mr. Wilson paid into the Social Security trust fund.

In 1969, Al Wilson's wife passed away in the institution where she had spent her last 25 years. Within 20 days, Nancy and Al Wilson were legally married. After waiting 19 years to be legally recognized as husband and wife, Al and Nancy's marriage lasted less than 1 year. Seven months after their marriage, Al passed away.

In 1991, upon turning 64, Nancy Wilson applied for widow benefits. She was refused on the grounds that the duration of her marriage did not satisfy the 9 month requirement. She went through the full appeal process, but was again denied.

A spouse forgoes employment to work in the home. Work in the home helps the family, but hurts the individual who, as a result, does not accumulate Social Security benefits. The intent of the Social Security Act is that widows and widowers be entitled to their spouse's benefit to offset their personal lack of sufficient benefits. This private relief bill seeks to fulfill this intent in the case of Nancy Wilson. The 9 month requirement for Social Security widow benefits is not disputed by this bill.

Nancy Wilson's situation fulfills the intent of the Social Security Act. Al and Nancy were prohibited from marrying. It was their choice to coexist as husband and wife, and as a family. Nancy raised the couple's children while Al provided financially for the family. Clearly, Nancy and Al Wilson would have married if the law would have allowed. Now, after a lifetime together, Nancy cannot collect the widow benefits she deserves.

This private relief bill makes Nancy Wilson eligible for widow benefits. The bill establishes that Nancy and Al were married for no less than 9 months. This unique situation is an exception that will not be repeated. Since their marriage, the no-fault divorce statute has been enacted in Massachusetts, which prevents this situation from reoccurring.

Thank you Mr. Speaker for this opportunity to advocate for my constituent, Nancy Wilson. Clearly, Nancy's unfortunate situation deserves to be addressed.

HONORING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 176th Anniversary of Greek Independence. On this day of celebration of Greek and American democracy, we pay tribute to the people of both our nations, and to the common bonds of democracy that unite Greece and the United States.

While the Founding Fathers of the United States of America drew heavily upon the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy, the founders of the modern Greek state modeled their government after that of the United States in an effort to best imitate their ancient democracy. Today, Greece is one of only three nations in the world that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict this century.

The First Congressional District in Connecticut has long-lasting ties to Greek democracy and independence. During the Greek War of Independence, fundraisers to support the struggle for democracy were held in the Hartford home of Lydia Sigourney. In addition to raising moneys, she sheltered refugees and in 1832 established the first Greek school in the United States. Today, that long-lasting relationship is evidenced by the 120,000 people of Greek ancestry who call the Constitution State home.

I support the efforts to expand the opportunities for cultural and trade exchange between the United States and Greece and the continuation of this historical relationship, and I offer my congratulations to all Greek-Americans as they celebrate Greek Independence Day.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 57,000 Veterans in the fifth district of Connecticut, I rise today to support H.R. 240, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1997.

Veterans provided an invaluable service to this Nation, and they continue to play a critical role in our work force. H.R. 240 protects the rights of veterans who are in the Federal work force by establishing a Special Counsel to bring those who knowingly violate preference laws before the Merit System Protection Board.

H.R. 240 also protects veterans during Federal reductions in force and expands veterans preference to jobs that are not currently covered. This bill opens Federal employment opportunities for individuals honorably discharged from the military after 4 years of service, by eliminating artificial barriers which prevent them from competing for Federal jobs because they are not already civilian employees or employees of a particular agency.

Our veterans are treasured national assets. They have defended our country in time of war, and safeguarded it in time of peace. This bill today honors them with the respect and dignity they deserve, by utilizing their skills and expertise in the Federal work force. I urge the House of Representatives to pass this measure unanimously.

MARTIN LEE AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, as you may know, the future Government of Hong Kong recently made public its specific proposals to restrict personal and political freedoms after the transition to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. Such proposals should be of great concern to every Member of this body because they represent the unraveling of the

economic and political miracle that is Hong Kong. These proposals are especially disturbing in light of other actions by China that are directly aimed at dismantling the fledgling democratic institutions in Hong Kong, such as the dissolution of the Legislative Council and threats against journalists by high-ranking Chinese officials.

In sharp contrast to these ominous signals from Beijing, Martin Lee continues unabated in his fight to preserve democracy and freedom in Hong Kong. Martin bravely perseveres despite the fact that he is reviled by the Government of the People's Republic of China as a traitor, and his public, global crusade to protect Hong Kong's way of life is a thorn in its side.

Last night in the Russell Caucus Room, Martin Lee received the 1997 Democracy Award from the National Endowment for Democracy, along with praise, good wishes and pledges of support from many Senators and Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. This award recognizes the strength of Martin's character, the righteousness of his cause and the commitment that he brings to his mission.

I believe that we owe it to the people of Hong Kong to meet with their legitimately elected representatives and give them our unequivocal support. Martin represents the very principles that our country was founded upon. More than most, Martin deserves to be heard at the highest level of our Government and he needs our help. He has heeded the call of freedom and democracy—we must not abandon him now.

It is in this spirit that I have written a letter to President Clinton calling on him to meet with Martin during this visit. Such a meeting would send a clear message to Beijing that the United States cares about what happens in Hong Kong—not just because we have economic interests there, but because we have shared values and ideals with the people of Hong Kong. I urge my colleagues to join me in asking the President to send this message and demonstrate our support for Hong Kong at this historic juncture.

BILL LYNCH—ALL AMERICAN BASKETBALL STAR

HON. DAVID M. MCINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lift up a very talented young man from Indiana's Second Congressional District. Billy Lynch of Muncie, IN, was recently awarded one of Indiana's top tributes as a basketball player.

Billy Lynch, a senior at Delta High School, was the recipient of the Trester Award for his leadership on the basketball team. The Trester is awarded for leadership above and beyond. Given each year to a senior member of the four State finalist, the Trester recipient must receive the nomination of his principle and be recognized as a team leader for his mental attitude.

Recently, Billy and his fellow teammates—the Delta Eagles—advanced all the way to the Final-Four Tournament in Indianapolis. In Indiana, advancing to the Final-Four is considered one of the highest honors earned by a ball-player.